

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application in view of the following remarks. This response is believed to fully address all issues raised in the outstanding Office Action mailed September 21, 2005. Furthermore, no new matter is believed to have been introduced hereby.

Claims 1, 6, 11, 15, and 24 have been amended as detailed above. Claim 13 has been amended without prejudice. Hence, claims 1-12 and 14-27 remain pending.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 19-23 have been allowed. Claim 13 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten to include all the recitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Obviousness Rejections

Claims 1-12, 14-18, and 24-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Publication No. 2001/0017701 to Ito (hereinafter "the '701 publication") and variously in combination with U.S. Publication No. 2002/0110073 to Shu (hereinafter "the '073 publication"), U.S. Patent No. 6452874 to Otsuka (hereinafter "the '874 patent"), U.S. Patent No. 6865431 to Hirota (hereinafter "the '431 patent"), and/or U.S. Publication No. 20010040698. Each of these rejections is fully addressed below.

CLAIMS 1-12, 14-18, AND 24-27

Without limiting the scope of the invention, to expedite the prosecution of the present application and to make typographical changes and in an effort to impart precision to the claims (e.g., by more particularly pointing out various embodiments, rather than to avoid prior art), independent claims 1, 6, 11, 15, and 24 have been amended as detailed above.

As amended, claims 1, 6, 11, 15, and 24 in part recite similar language to the objected to claim 13 (which is now canceled). As supported by the outstanding Office Action in indicating the allowability of claim 13, it is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references, alone or in combination, appear to teach, disclose, or suggest the claimed combination of features such as set forth in the amended claims 1, 6, 11, 15, and 24. Accordingly, claims 1, 6, 11, 15, and 24 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 2-5, 7-10, 12, 14, 16-18, and 25-27 depend from claims 1, 6, 11, 15, and 24, and should be allowable for at least similar reasons as their respective independent claims, as well as additional or alternative elements that are recited therein but not shown in the cited prior art.

Conclusion

Reconsideration and allowance of all claims is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is urged to telephone the undersigned if that would expedite prosecution of the application.

Respectfully Submitted,
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